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CIA Reforms?

The change at the Central Intelligence Agency may be more apparent than real. One career government official, Allen Dulles, is to be replaced by another, John McCone, former Atomic Energy Commission chairman and Defense Department aide.

Can McCone give the CIA the shake-up and reorientation it obviously needs? He has no background in intelligence work, and must rely only on his experience as a government administrator.

President Kennedy's attempt to keep the CIA out of politics is well advised. He first retained Allen Dulles, who had served under Republican and Democratic administrations in varying capacities. Now he has appointed McCone, who

served under both Truman and Eisenhower. The issue is not so much the desirability of a non-political CIA, however, as it is the choice of a new non-partisan chief who has the skills needed for running an agency which has yet to find its proper place in government.

Nothing was said at the time of McCone's appointment about the CIA's mission. Critics declare that it is both an intelligence-gathering agency and the executor of plans and plots based on this intelligence. It is a truism in the intelligence field that an agency should not be responsible for both intelligence and actual operations. The human tendency, as Dulles himself has admitted, is to tailor intelligence to suit the plans—unwittingly perhaps, but just as damagingly. Dulles contends that the CIA has not fallen into this error; his critics say it has.

It is to be hoped that the new broom at CIA sweeps aside the old, discredited concepts.

The task for new chief McCone is to cultivate the anonymity of a spy while seeing to it that his agency carries out its primary mission of finding out what is happening—and what is going to happen—around the globe. If operations are to be undertaken under the CIA aegis, they should at least be handled by a separate branch, and any overt act which might embarrass the government should be considered not only by CIA, but by a joint group of officials in Washington, representing the departments of state and defense.

The nation hears of CIA's failures, and not of its successes. Ideally, then, not much should be heard of CIA, but there should be an independent check on its activities. A joint survey group for operations within the administration would be one such check; another should be a carefully selected committee of Congress which would

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